

REMARKS

Claims 1 and 13 are amended. Claims 1-23, as amended, remain in the application. No new matter is added by the amendments to the claims.

The Rejections:

In the Office Action dated February 14, 2006, the Examiner rejected Claims 1-6, 10, and 13-18 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by St. Germain. The Examiner stated that St. Germain teaches a synthetic fiber rope assembly (Figure 1) comprising at least two ropes (Figure 5; details 7, 8) each formed of synthetic fiber strands (Column 2, lines 63-65) and extending generally parallel in a lengthwise direction at a predetermined distance from each other, a dumbbell shaped rope sheathing (Figure 5; detail 5) fixing said at least two ropes relative to each other in a firm torsional manner, and at least one reinforcement element (10) attached as an integral component of the rope sheathing (9), having an oblong shape and extending in a lengthwise direction, enveloping the rope sheathing in a tubular form, and exposed at an outer surface of the rope assembly for mechanically reinforcement, wherein the reinforcement element overlaps itself in the lengthwise direction (Figure 1 shows the cord overlaps itself at the end; likewise, the sheath/ reinforcement element extend the length of the rope assembly, in the shape of an oblong tube). In regards to improving a transverse resistance of the at least two ropes, the reinforcement element would inherently improve transverse resistance by its very presence.

The Examiner rejected Claims 8, 9, 11, and 19-21 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over St. Germain in view of Schuerch (4534163). The Examiner stated that St. Germain essentially teaches the invention as discussed above, but fails to specifically teach the different types of sheaths capable of being used to protect the ropes. According to the Examiner, Schuerch teaches that braided sheaths are well known as a source of protection to inner rope structures and it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art, at the time the invention was made, to utilize a braided sheath as taught by Schuerch, so as to provide protection in a more efficient manner.

The Response:

Applicants appreciate the allowance of Claims 22 and 23.

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The Examiner stated that Claims 7 and 12 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Applicants amended Claims 1 and 13 to further define the rope sheathing as having a fixed link attaching the ropes and fixing the ropes relative to each other in a firm torsional manner. This amendment is supported on Page 4 of the specification at Lines 27-30 wherein the fixed link 18 is described.

As stated on Page 6 of the specification at Lines 10-18:

“The so created link 18 of the rope sheathing 17 at the ropes 14 and 15 is so firm that only small relative motions occur between the strands 22, 24 of the ropes 14, 15 and the rope sheathing 17. The rope sheathing 17 defines the distance 19 between both stranded ropes 14, 15 with the bridging connecting fixed link 18, which acting as a torque bridge originating from the axial load of the rope of synthetic fiber 3, mutually compensates opposite directed torques of the ropes 14, 15 caused by the construction of the rope and thus, upon the bulk cross section of the rope of synthetic fiber 3, creates a torque compensation between the sum of all right-handed and all left-handed stranded parts.”

The loose double protective envelope (5, 10) shown in the St. Germain patent does not have or function as such a fixed link attaching the ropes (7, 8) and fixing them relative to each other in a firm torsional manner as defined by Applicants' amended Claims 1 and 13. As can be seen in Figs. 4 and 5 of St. Germain, the strands 7 and 8 are free to move relative to each other inside the inner cover 5 and are not attached by a fixed link. Confirmation that there is no attachment between the strands 7 and 8 and the cover 5 is found starting at line 50 in column 5 and ending at line 5 in column 6 wherein it is stated that the tubular cover is pulled over the loops of strands during assembly. Thus, there is no portion of the St. Germain roundsling that corresponds to the claimed fixed link which attaches two ropes in a firm torsional manner.

Schuerch shows a similar construction wherein the core of filaments is free to move within the jacket of ribbons and the outer plastic sheath.

Applicants believe that amended Claims 1-21 are not anticipated by St. Germain and are not rendered obvious by St. Germain in view of Schuerch.

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In view of the amendments to the claims and the above arguments, Applicants believe that the claims of record now define patentable subject matter over the art of record. Accordingly, an early Notice of Allowance is respectfully requested.

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